Didactical Guide on Employability. A Guide for Teachers to support Master's and PhD students preparing for successful future work in

Collana *Costruire il lavoro*

1. Annalisa Tonarelli, *Posti in piedi. Giovani in transizione fra università e lavoro*
2. Annalisa Tonarelli e Simona Viciani a cura di, *Le professioni intellettuali tra diritto e innovazione*
3. Paola Lucarelli a cura di, *Laurea e professione. Percorsi, indirizzi e luoghi di interesse: una mappa per orientersi nella scelta del lavoro*
4. Antonio Riccio, *Guida agile ai contratti di lavoro*
5. Vanna Boffo a cura di, *Giovani adulti tra transizioni e alta formazione*
6. Giovanna Del Gobbo, Glenda Galeotti, Valeria Pica, Valentina Zucchi a cura di, *Museums & Society. Sguardi interdisciplinari sul museo*
7. Vanna Boffo, Nicoletta Tomei, *Didactical guide on employability*

DIDACTICAL GUIDE ON EMPLOYABILITY

A Guide for Teachers to support Master's and PhD students preparing for successful future work in the field of Adult learning and Education

Vanna Boffo, Nicoletta Tomei

Costruire il lavoro

SETTE

Pacini Giuridica

Collana *Costruire il lavoro*
Pacini Editore

ISBN 978-88-3379-246-0
ISSN 2532-960X

Realizzazione editoriale
Pacini Editore
Via A. Gherardesca
56121 (Pisa)

Rapporti con l'Università
Lisa Lorusso

Responsabile di redazione
Gloria Giacomelli

Fotolito e Stampa
IGP Industrie Grafiche Pacini

INDEX

This volume is the result of the research carried out at the Department of Education, Languages, Interculture, Literature and Psychology of the University of Florence. It benefited from a university research grant for the publication in 2020

in partnership with

Strategic Partnership INTALL

International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

The ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership INTALL is a partnership between eight European universities and two practice institutions in the field of adult education and lifelong learning. It builds a bridge between academic learning and the field of practice in adult and continuing education.
Master's and doctoral students as well as practitioners in the field of adult education and lifelong learning are invited to join an Adult Education Academy in Würzburg. The programme is divided in two weeks. In the first week, participants learn about the international and European policies in adult education and lifelong learning. In the second week, participants jointly conduct their own international comparative study. INTALL builds on the results of the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership COMPALL (2015-2018).

Partner

Support

This project is funded with support from the European Commission (project number: 2018-1-DE01-KA203-004272). It is based on developments of the COMPALL-project, which was funded with support from the European Union (project number: 2015-1-DE01-KA203-002203). This communication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

INTRODUCTION

Vanna Boffo, Nicoletta Tomei

This Guide aims to offer a framework for supporting higher education students towards the acquisition of an initial set of important tools for entering the labour market. We considered the transition process faced by students in master's and doctoral study courses at the end of their programmes. We turned to the academic staff who accompany the construction of disciplinary competences because we believe that building a sound competence toolbox for each individual is necessary to reflect not only on professionalization, but also on the transversal tools, that prepare the professionalization itself.

The rationale behind the Guide

Knowing how to enter the labour market is very important in order to facilitate an appropriate, and potentially the most beneficial, transition to professional contexts. 'Transition' is an educational category that recalls vital steps of individuals and identifies the turning point among the roles of students, trainees, and professionals capable of leading their career path and, in some cases, also the career paths of others.

The literature on adult learning and education tends to deal with transition as an integral part of the adult development process (Mezirow, 1986, 1991). However, the attention on the meaning of inner changes and needs for personal and professional transformation have rarely been taken into consideration alongside the learning dimension. Therefore, the following pages intend to offer the academic staff - but also the undergraduate and postgraduate students - a guide with a major focus on these dimensions within the theme of work, which is a central theme for young adults and adults in general.

Career development, job-seeking, and work exploration are educational experiences and they should be an integral part of adult learning and education. Reflecting on such important aspects of human life is a duty for researchers in the fields of training and education.

To address the transition properly, it is necessary to know how to look back in time and space, but also understand how to build tools, attitudes, paths and learning evidence. Particularly in the areas of adult learning and education it is necessary to know what you want to achieve and how to get there, in order to create awareness, and the certainty of responsible and autonomous growth. The tools that help this process are important, but even more essential is the ability to reflect on and deepen inner motivations, life choices, and expectations for the future.

The path that the Guide delineates can be viewed as a narrative, which

goes from a personal story to the development of entrepreneurial mindsets by individuals, who at the end of the studies, must find their own place in the world.

The structure of the Guide

The first chapter represents the starting point and intends to answer the following question: *which type of stories can help students to reflect on their professional future?* Since storytelling is a central element for self-construction, the chapter shows the link between personal and other professional stories. Professional stories teach us what cannot be studied in textbooks: reflections and experiences that can guide students towards their future work. The chapter also reminds us that storytelling and narration are experiences that can be helpful to human beings for self-care and consideration for the future.

The second chapter offers a general overview of the meaning of employability as a concept explored by two British educators, Maintz Yorke and Peter Knight (2004, 2006, 2012). By challenging the separation of academic curricula and the labour market, they have proposed an understanding of employability not as a category that only pertains to the domain of economics and politics, but rather as a concept underlying the development of human beings and their ability to participate in the world of work as well as in the world of life.

Nowadays, the realignment of academic curricula and understanding the role of the most important tools for entering the labour market has facilitated them bringing these a step closer to each other. Skills are considered to be one of these tools. Therefore, knowing conceptual distinctions between terms such as 'knowledge', 'skills', and 'competences' is very important. The third chapter intends to answer the following question: *what are the technical and transversal skills for an adult learning and education professional?* Over the past decade, the OECD has carried out several research studies on skills, confirming their crucial role for the future development of countries. Unrevealing this complex topic shows how the question posed by this chapter is not trivial and in which ways the response can be innovative, despite the fact that the topic has been debated for decades.

The fourth chapter represents a toolbox that can support students entering the labour market. It analyzes the most common roles in the professional family of adult learning and education. Upon review of the European master's courses, these are: (1) coordinator of education and training services, (2) educator and trainer, (3) instructional designer, and (4) career manager/counselor. Each of these roles is described in a 'job profile' which identifies a set of skills for carrying out the profession. Even if they do not exhaust the wide and varied field of adult learning and education, they represent a good descriptive basis that can help students to get an overview of the vast array of online references that are included into the chapter and aimed at seeking an open position in the

field. Insights on how to write a Curriculum Vitae, draw up a cover letter, and create a profile on the main social networks for professionals are also provided.

The fifth chapter is a 'guide within the Guide' since it offers an in-depth look into an interesting - but not yet very widely used - tool: the ePortfolio. The concept of a Portfolio was developed several decades ago, but only recently started to be adopted by university career services. It is an important tool because it has a highly reflective value and represents a 'narrated' collection of what characterizes an educational path: the skills gained during the university experience can take on new and unprecedented meanings for the professional contexts, representing an important backdrop to one's career as an adult learning and education professional.

Finally, the sixth chapter leads to an even more innovative theme for adult education: entrepreneurship education. Scholars have identified various ways of developing entrepreneurship education. We decided to focus on an interpersonal perspective to develop an entrepreneurial attitude among students towards their life choices. Being entrepreneurial means being able to lead one's own lifepath with tenacity and sagacity. In order to know how to do this, it is essential to discover a proactive, engaged attitude towards life and the world.

Final remarks

At the end of each chapter there are some exercises proposed as student assignments. We believe that the empirical use of the theoretical content by the students can help facilitate achievement of skills and competences.

A key message that we would like to convey throughout this Guide is the urgency to create a stronger relationship between theory and practice, thoughts and actions, reflection and experiences. As Dewey has clearly highlighted and as Knowles, Kolb, Rogers, and Mezirow have undoubtedly continued to reflect and research upon, learning always comes from experience.

We wanted to offer a framework that can be used by the academic staff to prepare the students for the world of work and life - which is often not as it was imagined - and facilitate an intense reflection on innovative and transversal aspects of professional contexts of adult learning and education that can be managed in higher education for the benefits of future professionals.

CHAPTER I: THE INTALL PROJECT PRACTITIONERS' STORIES

Vanna Boffo

> Stories are an important aspect of a person's identity [...]; they are ways in which we talk about ourselves as human beings, becoming – to a certain extent – a mirror of these identities. [...] The patrimony of stories that the person has when he/she is an adult does not only constitute the source of personal stability, or personal transformations, but becomes, at the same time, a working tool, a compass through which it is possible to orient the self." (Smorti, 1996, p. 71)

Studies on language and its centrality for the human experience, as well as for the formation of subjects, first started with Wittgenstein in philosophy and led, thanks to Ricoeur's mediation, to Bruner's thesis that any communication uses and presupposes a process of narration (Boffo, 2005).

Human beings have always used storytelling for multiple purposes, including the transfer of knowledge. In ancient times, this took place through stories or songs. However, the essential aspect of storytelling has to do with its ability to establish our identity. From this point of view, storytelling is directed not towards an external event but towards our own life, reconstructed through an autobiographical journey that owes much to the stories to which it was exposed to (Bruner, 1990).

Narrating oneself means re-evoking experiences buried over time, recovering the fundamental passages of emotions and feelings, reconstructing the sources of memory, and relating them to one's present. However, for the narration to be effective, memory is not enough. It is, in fact, necessary that narrating subjects also devote themselves to listening to the many selves of which they are composed, or into which they are fragmented, in order to look at the 'drawing' that emerges from their life and read it as a path of meaning (Bettelheim, 1987).

Storytelling is therefore an activity through which humans try to make themselves intelligible to themselves and to a potential listener. The possibility that the story is directed at someone allows for interpreting this activity also as a social fact. From this point of view, sharing a story with those to whom the narration is directed, thereby opening it up to their interpretations, encourages us to rewrite it through their point of view and ultimately to give us a new form and find new orientations in life (Boffo, 2005).

From this perspective, storytelling shapes human life through the process of interpretation, self-interpretation, and reinterpretation of experience in the social context. Both our own experiences and those of other people only become known by interpreting them from their stories. However, the stories of others are often full of voids, which we usually fill using stories we already know. This is, according to Bruner (1990), an act of meaning in which the ex-

perience of the others neutralises indeterminacy, ambiguity, and uncertainty in our own experience and facilitates our communication with the world.

The search for communication with the world, starting from the attempt to give a coherent interpretation of the stories of others in accordance with our own humanity, is therefore a search for authenticity and self-listening. For this reason, Lyotard states that the knowledge transmitted from these narratives

- supports internal narrative processes,
- stimulates communication processes essential to learning, and
- bridges the gap between knowledge and action, because it speaks to emotions (Lyotard, 1979).

In this perspective, the potential of storytelling has always been used in the humanities and social sciences to collect useful data for research in different sectors. This practice led to the definition of a sound research approach called narrative inquiry. According to Clandinin and Connelly, narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through 'collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). Life-stories collected from this type of research lead to a wide range of individual, cultural, and professional practices, which include the use of many techniques and tools. The most common are:

- field notes;
- interviews;
- journals, letters;
- autobiographies; and
- orally told stories.

The main objective of these instruments is to bring out the tacit or implicit personal and social knowledge and the dynamics that determine individuals' choices in certain circumstances of personal and/or professional life. However, they also enable individuals to take stock and design their lives more consciously and responsibly knowing both how to ask the right questions about themselves and about the context in which they are placed and how to find meaningful answers regarding their own existential journey.

Among all the techniques mentioned, the interview may be the one most suitable to explain, based on the autobiographical narrative collected orally by the researcher, what marked the storyteller's life in work, in study, and in personal relationships. These marker events, situated at the intersection of personal, professional, and leisure time, are usually considered anticipators of transitions, namely changes in position over time and/or space, changes in one's identity profile, and one's social relations.

Since psychological and educational literature has interpreted work as an opportunity and a constraint to the construction of identity, work and research have been given the task of contributing to human formation and to the search for individuality and future horizons. In this perspective, professional contexts have become a privileged area for applying the narrative approach.

Work transitions were initially interpreted in the light of linear progression and career stability. Since the 1980s, however, 'the idealized vision of a traditional "organizational career" wherein one expected advancement and stability within one's career [has] become an anachronism (Greenhaus et al., 2010, p. 21). Careers therefore began to be interpreted along a less linear paradigm, which no longer requires a single study phase, followed by a period of job search and a stable entry into the labour market. Rather, the focus began to shift to what allows individuals to

- learn to learn,
- learn to look for work, and
- learn while working, repeatedly throughout life.

Following this approach, the INTALL project proposes professional life stories of professionals in the adult education sector to inspire participants to reflect on the most suitable job placement paths for them and their contextual situation.

In order to get the most from them, INTALL has developed a step by step analysis guide, that is summarized below. It can be presented to the students as a didactical insight together with the assignments at the end of the chapters.

Steps for the analysis of a professional story

1. Determine the primary goal of the story

There are three primary goals which define stories, that are linked to professional development:

- learning to learn;
- learning to find a job;
- learn while working.

These goals define a continuum along with the knowledge and the skills, that can be acquired, the activities and experiences, that are being made and the strategies, that are used to take on a different value. All of it concerning different types of audiences and to different formats, that are used to convey the story.

2. Identify the potential audience

Even where a story mainly represents value to the individual, a professional story can be addressed to different kinds of audiences:

- colleagues;
- potential employers;
- students and different kinds of job applicants;
- teachers and/or mentors.

The INTALL online stories represent professional stories aimed to inspire students and help them to reflect on who they are and who they want to be as professionals (goal setting).

3. Reflect on the tool for building the story

In order to build your story, there are a number of existing tools. Storytellers have autonomy in choosing (1) the format, and (2) the contents:

- letters, blogs/diaries, can be usually a suitable format for building an autonomous self-narrative;
- interviews and self-reports are mainly used in the research process to gather and interpret information;
- CVs, motivation letters and (e)Portfolios are mainly used for professional development, and less common as a tool for constructing life stories.

The INTALL professional stories use interviews in order to create narratives and provide the students with useful information.

4. Read through the story

Specific elements of a professional story can be found in the INTALL professionals' narratives. INTALL professionals tell us:

- who they are and where they are from;
- what they do as a professional and where;
- how many jobs they had prior to their current position;
- what achievements helped them on their path;
- which skills helped them progress;
- what others can do to enter in the field.

Fig. 1 - Different examples of professional achievements

5. Start the analysis process

a) Get informed through the story.
b) Identify relevant elements of the story.
c) Reflect how these elements design a progression path.
d) Connect with your self.

We will now discuss each of these four paths in more detail.

a) Get informed through the story.
Get the best from professional stories reading through them.

b) Identify relevant elements of the story.
Focus on:

- the objectives, motivations, expectations and wishes of the interviewee;
- the situations in which he/she makes significant professional choices (as a student, as a graduate, postgraduate, etc.);
- the internal or external resources, that he/she used to direct his/her career (include knowledge, experience & activities, skills & competences and strategies.).

c) Reflect how these elements design a progression path.
Reflect on the kind of path that can be delineated starting from these elements. Research suggests that graduates can find a job in the field through:

- Insertion following the reconstructions of a broken/different study path;
- using knowledge from the internship experiences;
- job placement through entrepreneurship;
- integration into work by study-work continuity;

- insertion through synthesis of previous diversified professional experiences (Torlone, 2010).

d) Connect with yourself

According to Bruner (1990), reading through a story is an act of meaning in which we spontaneously fulfill information gaps, using stories that we already know, especially our own stories. Therefore this process of merging our personal experience with other experiences is a search for authenticity and self-listening.

Faced with the story of a professional, who talks about his/her journey, allowing us a glimpse on how his/her motivations and achievements have brought him/her there, the most important things is to ask ourselves who we are, what are our achievements in terms of motivations, knowledge, experiences, skills and strategies are and who we would like to be. Comparing that with expectations, competences and progression of different professionals, we should start a reflexive dialogue which leads us from comparison to a deeper self-assessment for professional goal setting.

Tasks for students

After viewing the video interviews at

https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall/employment-stories/

identify:

1. the interviewee's objectives, motivations, expectations, and wishes;
2. the situations in which they make significant professional choices (as a student, as a graduate, as a postgraduate, etc.);
3. the internal or external resources they used to direct their career (empathy, resilience, presence of a mentor, or use of their own social and personal network, etc.);
4. the strategies that can be delineated starting from these elements (insertion following the reconstruction of a broken study path, insertion starting from the internship experience, job placement through entrepreneurship, integration into work by study-work continuity, insertion through synthesis of previous diversified professional experiences, etc.).

CHAPTER II: EMPLOYABILITY: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Vanna Boffo

As the purpose of this work of collecting and sharing professional stories of adult education professionals is linked to the theme of improving work integration paths for students and graduates, this chapter is aimed at investigating the concept of employability.

According to Boffo et al., 'we believe that employability is a central category, starting from which it is necessary to rethink the university educational process and through which it is important to decline the curricula of various courses of study' (Boffo, Gioli, Del Gobbo, & Torlone, 2017, p. 162).

In the field of education, 'research on employability started to be defined in the Anglo-Saxon pedagogical literature during the last five years of the last century, with an interesting reflection on the relationship between higher education and the labour market' (Boffo, Federighi, & Torlone, 2015, p. 152). This research allowed for interpreting employability not only as a result of an individual propensity but also as a result of some institutional formative choices in terms of personal achievements (Harvey, 2010).

The first perspective informed the definition of employability by Hillage and Pollard, according to which employability coincides with 'the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment. For the individual, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they use those assets and present them to employers and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work' (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p. 3).

The definitions by Harvey, Yorke, and Knight date back to the second perspective. According to Harvey, 'employability is not just about getting a job. Conversely, just because a student is on a vocational course does not mean that somehow employability is automatic. Employability is more than about developing attributes, techniques or experience just to enable a student to get a job, or to progress within a current career. It is about learning and the emphasis is less on "employ" and more on "ability". In essence, the emphasis is on developing critical, reflective abilities, to empower and enhance the learner' (Harvey, 2003, p. 1). According to the definition of Yorke and Knight, the concept of employability refers to 'a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy' (Yorke & Knight, 2006, p. 8).

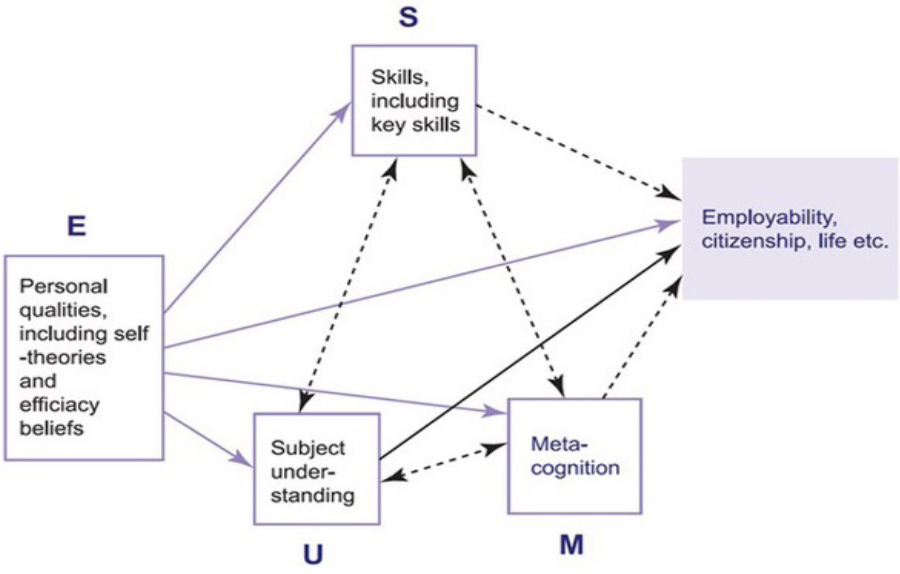
Commenting on those definitions, Boffo et al. state that 'the definitions of Harvey on the one hand and Yorke and Knight on the other hand introduce educational-pedagogical elements and extend the concept until it becomes the

foundation of innovative ways of considering higher education' (Boffo et al., 2017, pp. 163-164). For these reasons, this category has found a place in numerous documents dealing with education policies at the international level. In this literature, at least two main types of definition coexist: one known as employment-centred and one known as competence-centred. According to the first definition, employability is conceivable as 'a combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or enter employment, to stay in employment and to progress during their career' (European Council, 2010, p. 10). According to the second definition, a student or a graduate shows employability for an occupation if the knowledge, abilities, and competences acquired are functional to success in that job.

Policies inspired by an employment-centred definition leave the role of higher education institutions rather open, because 'many different practices at universities can increase graduates' chances of finding employment soon after graduation' (EuCom, EACEA, & Eurydice, 2014, p .64). The policies that focus on the development of skills, on the other hand, must instead be confronted with real employability skill development processes. Second, Yorke and Knight argue that a good skill development strategy should focus on:

- understanding;
- skilful practices;
- efficacy beliefs;
- metacognition.

Fig. 2 - USEM Model (Yorke & Knight, 2006, p. 4)



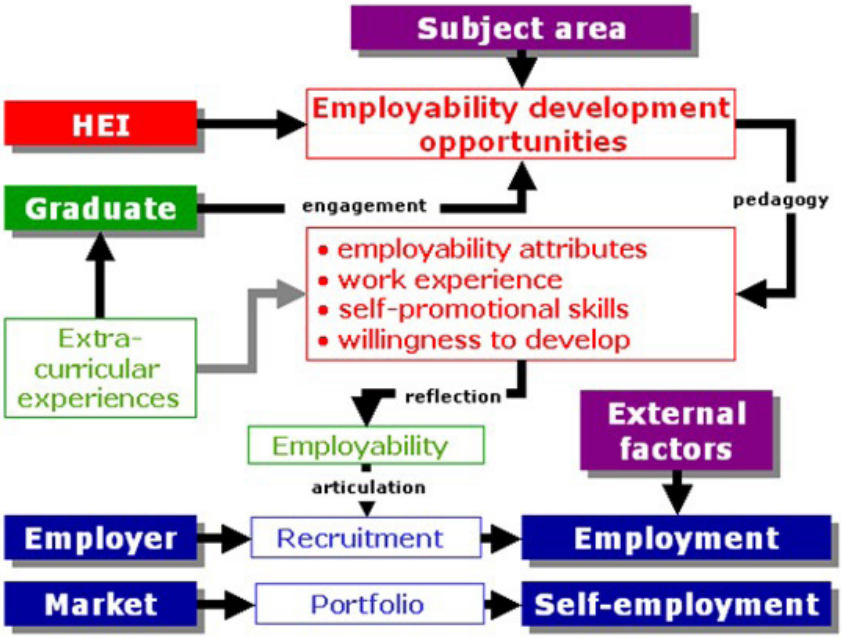
The so-called USEM model was subsequently taken up by Dacre-Pool and

Sewell, who clarified how: (1) knowledge (degree subject knowledge, skills and understanding + generic skills), (2) knowledge of experience (work and life experiences), (3) strategies (career development learning), and (4) affective aspects (emotional intelligence) contribute to supporting a reflective and 'evaluative' process on oneself, starting with measuring oneself with the challenges of the world of work.

Fig. 3 - Elements and processes of employability (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007, p. 280)

Alongside this model, Harvey has formulated a proposal that explains in a multifactorial way graduate's possible trajectories of employability. This model identifies a series of essential elements (employability attributes, work experiences, self-promotional skills, willingness to develop) that are developed by graduates as a result of the teaching contents and the development opportunities offered by the university, but also from extra-curricular experiences. The reflection on these elements is transformed into employability and measured against contextual and external factors (employer and market) resulting in different job placement paths.

Fig. 4 - Transition model from university to work (Harvey, Locke, & Morey, 2002, p. 4)

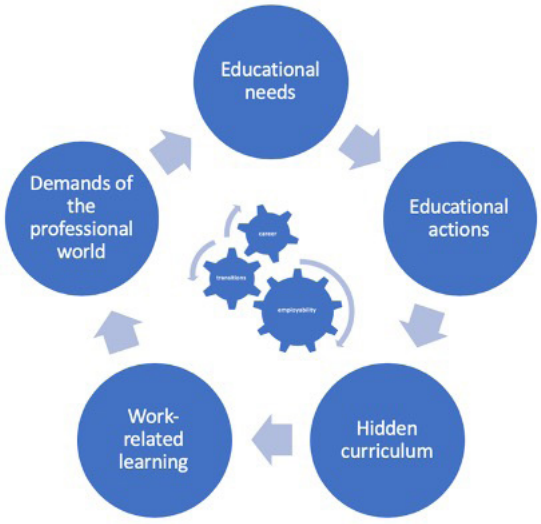


Moreover, through identifying the categories of engagement and pedagogy, the Harvey model suggests that two fundamental aspects should be considered:

- the different profiles of the students, and
- the processes and values that define the culture and specific curriculum of an institution.

Several studies deal with the experimentation of personalized processes that accompany students in the transition to the first 'decent job' (ILO, 2012, p. 8). These converge on the idea that the process calls into question the formal, non-formal, and informal dimension of learning and link them to a series of needs, actions, and experiences that unfold in educational contexts and are still closely related to the demands of the professional world.

Fig. 5 - Emp&Co Model (Boffo, Gioli, Del Gobbo, & Torlone, 2017, p. 170)



Even if 'there is a spectrum of ways in which employability can be developed through curricula' (Yorke & Knight, 2006, p. 14), the most frequently used learning actions for the development of employability refer to:

- work-based and work-related learning activities integrated into curricular courses or offered as extras;
- job placement, internships, and apprenticeship experiences;
- structured reflective activities and counselling on the experiences acquired in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts;
- guided exploration activities in professional contexts and meetings with employers organised by career services;
- recognition and validation of prior learning activities.

Tasks for students

Taking into consideration your experience as a student:

1. identify what your university has made in terms of career development activities, services, and experiences, and
2. answer the following questions:
   - Which of these are also present in the life stories of the professionals interviewed, and what value did they have for them?
   - What value could they have in terms of skill development for you?

CHAPTER III: TRANSVERSAL AND TECHNICAL COMPETENCES

Nicoletta Tomei

Until the end of the 1970s, having a university degree was a sufficient condition to stand out from the crowd and enter the world of work in an advantageous position. With the massification of education, the increased role of knowledge in production processes, and the contraction of jobs in many world economies, it has become necessary to invest in a broader range of skills to ensure greater competitiveness in the labour market.

OECD reminds us that 'given the rapid pace of change in today's world, a high degree of adaptability is needed for people to grasp life's many opportunities and address its myriad challenges' (OECD, 2019, p. 18). And this is particularly true for students and young graduates trying to enter into the labour market for the first time. Important elements in developing adaptability include making sure to acquire the right mix of skills, use them effectively, and continuously update them throughout individuals' lifetimes. Skills, in this perspective, are components of broader capability that enables people to act appropriately in a context by mobilising internal and external resources.

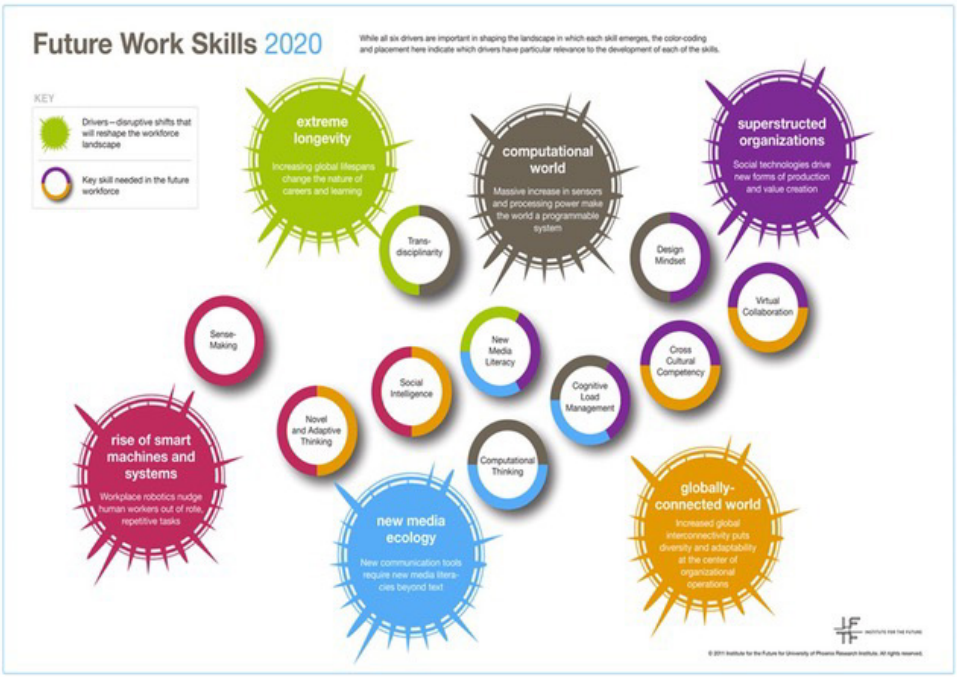
According to the European Commission, competences can be defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to the context (EuCom, 2006). Consequently, skills are specific abilities acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to carry out complex activities involving ideas, things, and people in order to learn, live, and work. This definition highlights the possibility to identify at least three kinds of skills: cognitive skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills. Nevertheless, skills are usually divided into two sets: hard skills, which can change according to the economic field and specific work area in which activities take place, and soft skills, which are generally considered transversal or common to many different fields and workplaces.

Even if soft skills are usually represented as 'a dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive abilities, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills alongside ethical values' (Haselberger, Oberhuemer, Perez, Cinque, & Capasso, 2012, p. 82), referring to soft skills for employability, Harvey, Moon, and Geall (1997) emphasise willingness to learn, self-management skills, adaptability, communication skills, team-working, and interpersonal skills. Stephenson and Yorke (1998) stress oral communication, workload management, team working, managerial skills, problem analysis, critical analysis, group problem-solving, stress resistance, commitment.

Brennan, Johnston, Little, Shah, and Woodley (2001) highlight the importance of the ability to work independently and under pressure, oral communication skills, accuracy, attention to details, time management, adaptability, team working, taking responsibility and decisions, planning, coordinating, and organising.

Due to the difficulty in identifying specific attributes that are common at a global level, multiple studies in the last decades have tried to do so by taking into consideration some megatrends. Among others, the Institute for the Future (Davis, Fidler, & Gorbis, 2011) chose six drivers as the most important and relevant to future work skills. According to this landscape, ten competences will be critical for success in the workforce.

Fig. 6 - Future work skills according to megatrends (Davis, Fidler, & Gorbis, 2011, pp. 6-7)

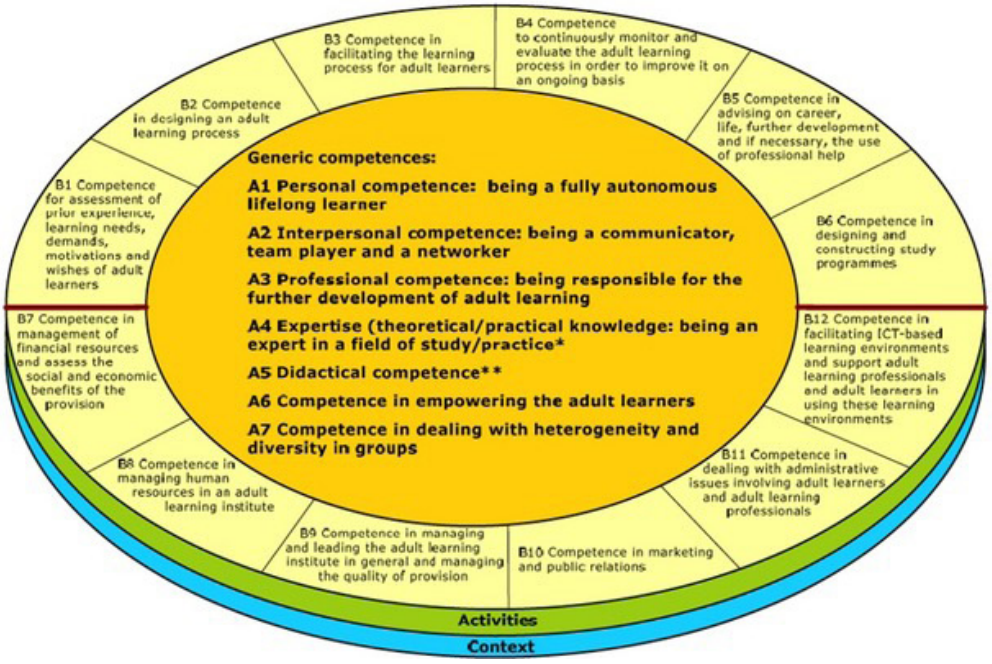


In the same perspective, the World Economic Forum suggests that, since we are at the beginning of a fourth industrial revolution, the need for more talent in certain job categories will be accompanied by high skills instability across all job categories, making more worthwhile to invest in certain cross-functional skills such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, creativity, people management, coordination with others, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility (World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 21).

Prospective adult educators and lifelong learning professionals should try to reflect on those disruptive changes, because they will have a deep impact on their professional fields and on the competences they have to develop. While,

back in 2010, Research voor Beleid was pleased to present a competence profile of adult education and lifelong learning professionals that enlisted 13 fields of activity and 19 key competences, the picture could be now highly different.

Fig. 7 - Graphic representation of the set of key competences of adult learning professionals (Buiskool, Broek, van Lakerveld, & Zarifis, 2010, p. 11)



* *For professionals not directly involved in the learning process, the expertise concerns not subject knowledge, but specific (for example managerial, administrative or ICT) expertise.*

** *For professionals not directly involved in the learning process or supportive in a managerial, administrative way, the didactical competence is less relevant.*

Task for students

Based on the the list below, (1) reflect on the skills and their descriptions below and (2) answer the following questions:

- Are those skills relevant in the adult education and lifelong learning sector in your country?
- Which skills are most important to you?
- In which situation did you develop this skill? Through which activities?
- Is it possible to develop and practice them during your study path?

Skills	Description
Analytical thinking	Analyse information and use logic to address work-related issues and problems
Innovation	Use creativity and alternative thinking to develop new ideas for and answers to work-related problems
Active learning	Understand the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making
Learning/teaching strategies	Select and use training/teaching methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things Identify the educational needs of others, developing formal educational or training programmes or classes, and teach or instruct others
Critical thinking	Use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems
Complex problem-solving	Identify complex problems and review related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions
Leadership	Be willing to lead, take charge, and offer opinions and direction. Have an impact on others in the organisation and display energy and leadership
Emotional intelligence	Be sensitive to others‘ needs and feelings, be personally connected to others, be aware of others‘ reactions, and understand why they react as they do

Monitoring	Monitor/assess the performance of oneself, other individuals, or organisations to make improvements or take corrective action
Teamworking	Cooperate with others providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals
Relating with multicultural groups	Respect cultural differences among groups, be tolerant, and avoid cultural, social, and religious stereotypes
Communicating (orally and in writing) with others	Talk to others to convey information effectively and communicate effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience
Active listening	Give full attention to what other people are saying, take time to understand the points being made, ask questions as appropriate, and avoid interrupting at inappropriate times.
Using ICT	Retrieve, assess, store, produce, present, and exchange information.
Planning, organising, and developing	Identify and group the work to be performed, define and delegate responsibility and authority, and establish relationships for the purpose of enabling.
Acting ethically	Respect the key moral principles, including honesty, fairness, equality, dignity, and individual rights.

González & Wagnaar, 2005; World Economic Forum, 2018

CHAPTER IV: TOOLS FOR ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

Paula Guimaraes, Natalia Alves

In line with the narrative highlighted before, OECD (2019) reminds us that 'technological progress is transforming societies, economies and people's lives as never before […] [T]o thrive in a digital workplace, workers need a broad mix of skills – strong cognitive and socio-emotional skills as well as digital skills' (p. 3). The European Commission's Communication *A new skills agenda for Europe: Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness* proposes ways to address the skills challenges that Europe is currently facing. Employment, education, social inclusion, and poverty reduction are changing fast through the digitalisation of our society.

Boosting digital skills is one of the priorities not only of the European Commission but also of any country that wants to make the most of digitalisation. There is a variety of frameworks through which digital skills are being fostered. The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, also known as DigComp, first published in 2013 and updated in early 2015, identifies the key components of digital competence in 5 areas, which can be summarised as below:

- **Information and data literacy**: Focuses on the ability to articulate information needs, to locate and retrieve digital data, information, and content; to judge the relevance of the source and its content; to store, manage, and organise digital data, information, and content.
- **Communication and collaboration**: Focuses on the ability to interact, communicate, and collaborate through digital technologies while being aware of cultural and generational diversity; to participate in society through public and private digital services and participatory citizenship; to manage one's digital identity and reputation.
- **Digital content creation**: Focuses on the ability to create and edit digital content; to improve and integrate information and content into an existing body of knowledge while understanding how copyright and licences are to be applied; to know how to give understandable instructions for a computer system.
- **Safety**: Focuses on the ability to protect devices, content, personal data, and privacy in digital environments; to protect physical and psychological health, and to be aware of digital technologies for social well-being and social inclusion; to be aware of the environmental impact of digital technologies and their use.
- **Problem solving**: Focuses on the ability to identify needs and problems and to resolve conceptual problems and problem situations in digital environments; to use digital tools to innovate processes and products; to keep up-to-date with the digital evolution (Joint Research Group, 2016).

For students, graduates, and job seekers in general, some abilities in those five areas should be essential elements of their assets, especially considering that one of the ways in which organisations are applying Internet technology, and particularly World Wide Web technology, is as a platform for recruiting and testing applicants (Livens & Harris, 2003).

This awareness should accompany jobseekers during all phases of the job search and while preparing each application. Although in fact some traditional application tools and processes remain valid, the digitalisation of recruitment enhances the relevance of certain elements.

- **Attraction** – The company tries to attract candidates through reports of those already working in the company, job advertisements, employer branding strategies to get spontaneous applications, and social media recruiting activities (typically only big companies can outsource the whole process).
- **Selection** – The best candidate for the company is identified through CV screening, interviews, and assessments.
- **Onboarding** – The employment contract, the classification, the salary level, any benefits, the procedure for requesting permits and holidays, and working hours are proposed to the candidate.
- **Measurement** – The process of hiring is evaluated and the candidate's choice is also assessed in terms of return on investment.

The job search is the result of the complex articulation of two main moments: the moment of reflection on ourselves and the moment of active reflection on the context in which we are. The first moment encompasses all the reflexive practices that allow us to:

- learn to make learning achievements visible to ourselves by collecting evidence and organising that evidence in an effective narrative;
- identify our values, our expectations, and our career goals;
- take actions to achieve them, starting the second stage of the process.

Once we have acquired a certain level of self-awareness, it is easier to identify the professional sector of our interest, the one that valourises our talents because it corresponds to the characteristics that set us apart.

Obviously, once we understand the market sector we want to enter, it is necessary to understand the demands that characterise it and to find adequate sources of information about the occupational profiles sought and open positions accessible for us.

In this regard, the INTALL group has produced an online toolkit useful to navigate between the different national and international offers.

You can find more information on job vacancies for adult educators in:

https://unjobs.org/themes/adult-education

https://www.indeed.co.uk/Adult-Education-jobs
https://www.indeed.com/q-Adult-Education-jobs.html
https://www.totaljobs.com/jobs/adult-education
https://www.reed.co.uk/jobs/adult-education-jobs
https://pt.jooble.org/emprego-educador-adultos
https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/search/?keywords=educador&originalSubdomain=pt
https://ofertas-emprego.pt

Once this is done it is important to become familiar with the various occupational profiles in the sector. In the field of adult education and lifelong learning, the most widespread are:

- coordinator of education and training services;
- educator and trainer;
- instructional designer;
- career manager/counsellor.

COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES

General description

As a coordinator of education and training services, you will be in charge of designing, planning, developing, and assessing education and training programmes.

You will manage teams of other professionals working in education and training programmes and coordinate their work.

Jobs may be advertised under different titles such as: programme/project manager, adult education manager, education and training manager.

Tasks/responsibilities

As a coordinator of educational services, you will need to:

- perform needs analysis and talent development diagnosis;
- design educational and training programmes based on the organisation's and/or adult learners' needs;
- plan education and training programmes according to needs analyses and the established programmes goals;
- monitor the development of education and training programmes;
- evaluate education and training programmes;
- assess adults' learning;
- devise individual adult learners' education and training plans;

- produce education and training materials;
- prepare education and training programme budgets and keep within budget.

Qualifications

Adult educators need to work with other professionals. This area of work is open to a wide range of graduates (according to the European Qualification Framework level 6, 7, or 8), but the following subjects are particularly relevant:

- education research;
- adult education;
- pedagogy/andragogy;
- business/management;
- cultural studies.

Skills

You need to have the following skills:

- creative and critical thinking;
- ability to adapt to a wide variety of circumstances;
- teamwork;
- team management and coordination, project organisation, planning, and implementation, communication, leadership;
- negotiation;
- learning to learn.

Employers

There are opportunities for coordinators of education and training services in private and public employment sectors. These include:

- private firms;
- central and local government;
- NGOs;
- education and training institutions;
- health services.

EDUCATOR AND TRAINER

General description

As an educator/trainer, you will be in charge of planning and delivering

sessions in education and training programmes. In addition to your education and training skills, you will need to be an expert in one of the two areas: technical/professional skills and general skills. As an educator/trainer, you must keep up to date with the developments in your subject area, new resources, and teaching methods.

Tasks/responsibilities

As an educator/trainer, you need to:

- prepare and deliver lessons;
- give feedback on adult learners' progress and development;
- research new topic areas, maintain up-to-date subject knowledge, and prepare new materials;
- select and use different learning resources and equipment;
- support adult learners on an individual basis through academic or personal difficulties;
- assess adult learners' knowledge and skills;
- select and implement formal and non-formal activities;
- maintain records of adult learners' development.

Qualifications

As an adult educators, you need to work with other professionals. This area of work is open to a wide range of graduates (according to the European Qualification Framework level 6, 7, or 8), but the following subjects are particularly relevant:

- education research;
- adult education;
- pedagogy/andragogy;
- teacher education;
- cultural studies.

Skills

You need to have the following skills:

- communication;
- listening;
- learning to learn;
- ability to inspire and motivate adult learners;
- understand the needs and feelings of adult learners;
- teamwork;
- work independently;

- creativity;
- interpersonal and facilitation skills.

Employers

There are opportunities for educators/trainers in education and training services in private and public employment sectors. These include:

- private firms;
- central and local government;
- NGOs;
- formal and non-formal education and training institutions;
- health services.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER

General description

As an instructional designer, you will be in charge of producing learning and assessment materials to be used online.

Instructional designers do not have direct contact with learners. They design, develop, and assess courses and curriculum by creating education and training materials and adult learners' guides.

Tasks/responsibilities

As an instructional designer, you need to:

- create learning activities and course content to be used online;
- work with subject-matter experts and identify adult learners' education and training needs;
- state goals and related content;
- provide exercises and activities that enhance the learning process;
- create supporting material/media (audio, video, simulations, role-plays, games, etc.);
- develop learning assessment instruments;
- create adult learners' guides and education and training manuals.

Skills

As an instructional designer, you need:

- written communication skills;

- IT skills:
- knowledge of course development software and learning management systems;
- leaning to learn skills;
- creativity;
- visualising skills;
- storyboarding skills;
- ability to write instructional texts, audio, and video scripts.

Qualifications

Instructional designers need to work with other professionals. This area of work is open to a wide range of graduates (according to the European Qualification Framework level 6, 7, or 8), but the following subjects are particularly relevant:

- education research;
- adult education;
- pedagogy/andragogy;
- instructional design;
- IT and education;
- cultural studies.

Employers

There are opportunities for instructional designers in education and training services in private and public employment sectors. These include:

- private firms;
- central and local government;
- education and training institutions;
- IT organisations.

CAREER MANAGER/COUNSELOR

General description

As a career manager/counselor, you will provide information, advice, and guidance to help adults make education and training choices. You also help people explore learning from experience.

The help and advice you give will include identifying options for suitable careers, advising on how to write a good CV and covering letter, assisting with the application process, and helping to locate relevant education and training courses.

Tasks/responsibilities

As a career manager/counselor, you need to:

- interview people one-to-one or in small groups to discuss career or education and training options;
- plan career development and support organisations to meet people's needs;
- advise people on how to source relevant education and training courses or qualifications and what funding might be available;
- provide advice on CV, applications, job hunting, and interview techniques,
- run small group sessions or larger presentations on all aspects of career services and topics related to personal development;
- help people to understand the current job market and education and training opportunities more adequately;
- negotiate with other organisations on behalf of people;
- keep up to date with labour market information, legislation, and professional and academic developments.

Skills

As a career manager/counselor, you need:

- communication, observation, and listening skills;
- ability to motivate and establish trustful relationships with adult learners;
- an empathetic, non-judgmental, and ethical approach;
- teamwork skills;
- ability to work independently;
- organisational skills;
- problem-solving skills;
- research skills.

Qualifications

As a career manager/counselor, you need to work with other professionals. This area of work is open to a wide range of graduates (according to the European Qualification Framework level 6, 7, or 8), but the following subjects are particularly relevant:

- education research;
- adult education;
- human resources management;
- psychology;
- sociology;
- cultural studies.

Employers

There are opportunities for career managers/counsellors in education and training services in private and public employment sectors. These include:

- private firms;
- central and local government;
- education and training institutions.

Sources:

LinkedIN (https://www.linkedin.com)
European Qualification Framework (https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page)

When a position pertaining to a specific professional profile is found, it will often have this form, and making it easy to crossover between candidates' skills and requirements, and those provided by the employer. In this way, students will understand for which positions it makes sense to apply.

If they found good matches, is time to write their CV and cover letter. Paying attention to the language and keywords in the announcement can guide them in drafting their documents.

For a more accurate guide, students can follow the instructions proposed by the INTALL group.

How to write a CV?

When preparing your CV, you should be able to:

- find different sources of recruitment;
- choose from different sources of recruitment you found more suitable to your interests, knowledge, and skills;
- analyse the content of job announcements by identifying the compulsory and preferential requirements and acknowledging the professional activities, knowledge, and skills required;
- assess critically your knowledge and skills for the job;
- adapt your CV to the job profile.

There are different models for preparing a CV. For detailed information, see the following links:

- https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/pt/documents/curriculum-vitae
- https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/en/lp/compose

- https://www.dcu.ie/careers/cv.shtml

How to write a cover letter?

When preparing a cover letter, there are some aspects to be considered for being persuasive and convincing. For detailed information, see the following link:

- https://www.dcu.ie/careers/cv.shtml

How to prepare for a job interview?

When preparing for a job interview, you should be able to:

- read carefully the job announcement, your cover letter, and your CV;
- analyse critically your CV, identifying the situations/former jobs in which you developed your knowledge and skills;
- deeply analyse the job you apply for and relate the work tasks you will have to perform to your knowledge and skills;
- be on time for the job interview.

You may also think about answers to possible questions that may be asked during a job interview, such as:

- What do you know about this company/organisation?
- Why do you want to work in this company/organisation?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses for the job you are applying for?
- How much do you expect to earn?
- Why do you think you should be selected?
- How will the company/organisation benefit from hiring you?

For detailed information on how to prepare to a job interview, see the following link:

- https://www.dcu.ie/careers/interviews.shtml

How to introduce myself on social media such as LinkedIn?

When introducing yourself on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, take into account the following aspects:

- choose a discrete picture of yourself;
- prepare a short but effective introduction about yourself and indicate webpages in which other people may find professional activities you were or are involved in;
- describe various education, training, and professional experiences you have developed throughout life in order to show the learning you hold;
- mention the volunteer, cultural, sports projects/activities you are/have been involved in;
- search for and carefully choose persons, organisations, and projects related to your professional domain and ask them to join your network;
- be selective when you accept new contacts to join your network;
- identify your most relevant skills and ask key people to endorse you.

For detailed information on how to introduce yourself on LinkedIn, see the following links:

- https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-different-ways-introduce-yourself-linkedin-ishakharub
- https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-introduce-yourself-stranger-linkedin-stacey-lane
- https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-introduce-yourself-effectively-when-networking-jim-schibler

Last but not least, when students have sent an application, is highly important to restart the process from the beginning and evaluate how they identify their values, their competences and skills, their strengths and weakness in order to apply, as well as answer the following questions:

- How did I respond to the demands of my potential employer in terms of motivation and emotional investments?
- Was my application short, nice, clear, detailed, and specific to the position?

As a teacher do not hesitate to invite them to use their networks, virtual and non-virtual, to reflect again in preparation of their next steps.

Task for students
Based on what you learned in this chapter: - register or access on LinkedIn; - create or update your social media profile, by uploading a new CV; - use it to apply for positions you have found online or to discuss it with your virtual community, if appropriate.

CHAPTER V: THE USE OF E-PORTFOLIOS TO ASSIST EMPLOYABILITY

Maria Slowey, Tanya Zubrzycki

The use of portfolios is an important tool that has the ability to enhance the different kinds of student's reflections and preparations that have been discussed above.

This section on ePortfolios can help support the learning, employment prospects, and career management for students in the adult education and learning field.

> A portfolio is an 'organized collection of documents or artifacts that can be used to demonstrate knowledge, skills, values, and achievements, which contains a commentary or exegesis to explain the relevance, credibility and coherence of each artifact or document, and where necessary provides information about standards of performance' (Cooper & Love, 2007, p. 270).

Technological advances have facilitated the emergence of electronic portfolios – frequently referred to as ePortfolios. Some potential advantages ePortfolios may have over paper-based portfolios include: the use of more diverse materials; easier navigating and editing; the ability to show how artefacts evolve over time; as well as the possibility of inviting feedback from peers and teachers (Scully, O'Leary, & Brown, 2018, p. 2).

In the literature, the contents of a portfolio are often described as 'artefacts'. The word 'artefact' has its origin in the Italian word 'artefatto', from Latin *arte* 'by skill' (ablative of ars 'art') and *factum* 'thing made', (past participle of *facere* 'to make, do') (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.).

However, what really matters is the learning.

> Creating an e-portfolio involves skills essential for 21st century learning – organising and planning material, giving and receiving feedback, reflecting, selecting, and arranging content to communicate with a particular audience in the most effective way (JISC, 2019).

ePortfolios differ from CVs in two important ways, as they usually will include: (1) a reflective element, and (2) a dialogue element (Ravet, 2010).

The desired outcome of ePortfolios is the 'generation of a useful product that serves as comprehensive evidence of the learner's skills and competences and can be shared with others' (Scully, O'Leary, & Brown, 2018, p. 9).

Depending on the circumstances, ePortfolios can be used in different ways and for different purposes:

- as part of an undergraduate or postgraduate module;

- for assessment;
- to support employability;
- for lifelong learning.

Steps towards generating an ePortfolio

1. Determine the primary goal of the ePortfolio

There are three primary goals which define the audience and hence the relevant format, contents, and tools.

- Showcase Portfolio: examples of work/achievements to support employment applications.
- Assessment Portfolio: for summative assessment or evaluation, to receive a grade.
- Learning Portfolio: drafts/unpolished work (Scully, O'Leary, & Brown, 2018, p. 2).

2. Explore INTALL materials

INTALL materials can be explored for criteria for working in the field of adult learning:

- INTALL Employability toolkit: job profiles of adult educators, comprising tasks and responsibilities, qualifications, skills, and potential employers;
- Professional stories generated as part of INTALL (see Chapter I);
- INTALL case studies.

3. Review possible tools for building an ePortfolio

A number of tools exist for building ePortfolios. Students should 'own' their portfolio, which assumes autonomy by choosing: (1) the artefacts to include; and (2) the technological platform to create them, which should facilitate, not interrupt, the process of portfolio building (Scully, O'Leary, & Brown, 2018).

However, it is important for the academic staff and students to be aware of privacy implications, which must be considered when selecting which tool to use. In general, they would be well advised to explore the platform used at their 'home' university.

For example, a number of universities use a system called Mahara, which at the time of writing this Guide is provided to organisations (to be used by people in the organisation, e.g. students, lecturers, etc.) at no cost as an open source software, under the https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.html, version 3 or later. The system is modular in design to maximise flexibility and extensibility. This is the platform used, for example, at Dublin City University, Ireland.

More details can be found at the link:

- https://mahara.org/view/view.php?id=6.

Other potential tools for ePortfolios can include ePortfolio platforms, content management systems, blogs, and web publishing sites (Ravet, 2010).

4. Possible sections of an ePortfolio

A useful example of specific sections of a portfolio for students in adult education and lifelong learning is from the European Adult Education (Young) Professionals Learning Platform (EAEA, 2017). The topics suggested below partially draw on the outcomes of this project.

1. Introduction

- Cover page
- Table of contents
- Profile/interests (students introducing themselves)
- Values (e.g. statement of teaching philosophy)

2. Professional experience & career

- Professional qualifications
- Work experience – Resume
- Samples of work
- Awards and honours
- Letters of reference
- Career summary and goals
- Achievements

3. Education & training

- Educational qualifications (e.g. degrees, modules, and courses taken)
- Internships
- Research areas
- Scientific publications and/or articles
- Professional networking
- Other competences and skills

4. Volunteer work

5. International experience

6. Personal interests

- Relevant travel, cultures, hobbies, etc.

5. Building an ePortfolio repository

There are four main stages in building the evidence for an ePortfolio.

a) Collect evidence of learning, knowledge, skills, and competences;
b) Select relevant evidence against known standards;
c) Reflect on the reasons for choosing certain artefacts and on strengths and weaknesses;
d) Connect with the audience and peers for feedback (adapted from Ravet, 2010, p. 57).

Each of these four parts are considered in more detail below.

a) Collect artefacts

The first stage involves students collecting artefacts representing evidence of their learning, knowledge, skills, and competences.

Examples of artefacts include:

- artefacts representing students' best work,
- resume,
- testimonies,
- personal statements,
- links to relevant social networks,
- writing samples,
- photographs and videos documenting accomplishments,
- teachers' evaluations of performance in a given area,
- skills and competences

(Ravet, 2010, p. 56; Scully, O'Leary, & Brown, 2018, p. 2)

Cross-checking with the INTALL profiles of adult educators can facilitate selection of most relevant artefacts, particularly for skills and competences.

The ePortfolio gives students an opportunity to describe skills they have acquired as part of the learning process, professional or extra-curricular activities. Students can reflect on where, when, and in what context they have developed these skills. INTALL profiles of adult educators provide further details on each area of relevant skills:

- Analytical thinking
- Innovation
- Active learning
- Learning/teaching strategies
- Critical thinking
- Complex problem-solving
- Leadership
- Emotional intelligence
- Using ICT
- Monitoring
- Teamwork
- Relating with multicultural groups
- Communicating with others (orally and in writing)
- Active listening
- Planning and organising
- Acting ethically

b) Select relevant evidence against known standards

Evaluate critically all the evidence and artefacts and select those that are relevant for desired career paths and those that demonstrate impact in the student's field of adult learning. Cross-checking with INTALL materials such as adult educator profiles can facilitate selection of the most relevant artefacts. Please refer to 'Possible sections of an e-Portfolio' part earlier in this chapter for suggested portfolio sections.

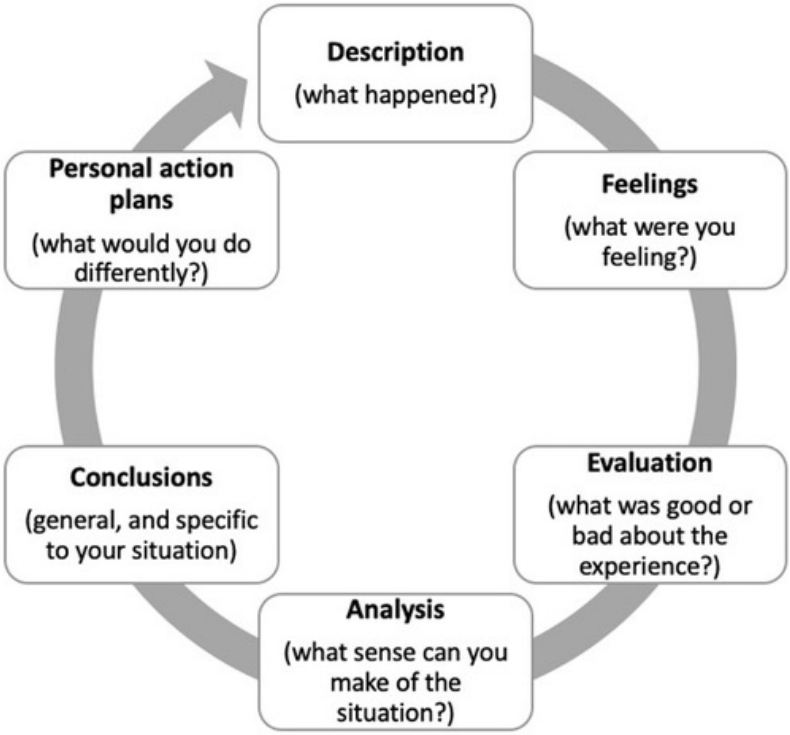
c) Reflect on the choice of artefacts

Reflect on the reasons for choosing certain artefacts, as well as on their strengths and weaknesses. True reflection should evidence deep learning; with learners analysing the skills they have learned from a particular exercise, linking these to other aspects of their studies, and identifying how they may use the skills 'for a lifetime, professionally, personally and civically' (Jenson, 2011, p. 52).

There are a number of models for reflective thinking and writing. The Dublin City University (DCU) Reflective Writing Guide can be used as a resource to assist students in this process, as it lists a number of approaches for students to select the one that makes sense to them personally (please see link under 'Other Resources' in the References list). According to the DCU Guide, reflective thinking and writing as part of an ePortfolio involves exploring and explaining events rather than simply describing them.

There are many models that may guide students' reflective thinking. The DCU Guide lists several such approaches for students to select the one that makes sense to them personally. One such approach is a reflective cycle by Gibbs (1988) shown in Figure 8.

Fig. 8 - Reflective cycle by Gibbs (Adapted from Gibbs, 1988)



d) Connect with audience and peers for feedback

Engaging in a dialogue about the ePortfolio is considered to be another distinctive feature for student portfolios. Various platforms may have a feature allowing students to discuss and receive feedback about their ePortfolio from their *teachers, peers, colleagues*, and others. This can be done, for example, by sending a link to a particular portfolio they would like feedback on.

The benefits of this dialogical approach described in the literature include the opportunity to:

- receive friendly advice on how to improve their ePortfolio(s);
- reflect upon receiving feedback and make any needed changes (see section 'Reflect on the choice of artfacts' above).

6. Share and network with ePortfolios (groups, potential employers, etc.)

Where a student intends to use their ePortfolio to support employability, it is important that they understand they have control over who gets access to what part of their ePortfolio. So, for example, in relation to employment they will need to ensure that the evidence relates to their knowledge and skills they have acquired which are relevant to the position in question.

Overall, the matter of data protection and privacy should be taken very seriously. The issues of privacy, and of who will have access to student's ePortfolio should be decided upon at the start of the process. Please be aware that if students share information on the internet, it may not be easily removed and they may not have the full control in regards to who sees, copies, shares or edits it. For this reason, the ePortfolio structure described above is only a suggestion, and students are advised to use caution in all matters pertaining to their and other people's personal data, and to aim for an appropriate balance between sharing information about their knowledge and skills on the one hand and retaining full control over their ePortfolio on the other hand. When students build their profile, they should consider every single piece of information not only as to whether it makes a good impression but also if it is safe to share.

Wishing you all the best in supporting students in finding a job in the adult learning field through ePortfolio, we remind you that if students compose a good one it will be easier for them to:

- give visibility to what they have already done;
- define their goals;
- identify competences and skills;
- evaluate individually and collectively their learning process or job research.

Task for students

Select three examples of artefacts which provide evidence of your learning – for example, personal statements and visual materials (photographs and videos) which document your accomplishments – and try to answer the following questions:

- Describe the artefact you have selected
- Why did you decide to select it for an ePortfolio?
- Describe the learning you gained (knowledge and skills)
- How do you feel about the experience?
- What would you do differently?

CHAPTER VI: FROM EMPLOYABILITY TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Nicoletta Tomei

The subject of entrepreneurship education has long been debated in the educational field. Some positions are strongly criticised for an allegedly excessive economic shift in education, understood above all as the result of a position of interest to certain groups (Terzaroli, 2018). However, for students and graduates seeking to enter the labour market, reflecting on this concept could be very important.

Common sense and ordinary language suggest that entrepreneurship is the activity of setting up a business or businesses, taking financial risks in the hope of profit. In this perspective, it requires individuals to have attitudes and specific competences in economic, managerial, and financial areas as well as certain soft skills such as communication and negotiation.

Nevertheless, specialised literature in different fields conceives entrepreneurship not only as an activity but also as a competence, broadening the meaning of this concept. According to the European Council definition, entrepreneurship competence 'refers to the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others. It is founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value' (European Council, 2018, annex p. 11).

There are three main points to this definition. First, it puts the creation of value – not profit – at the centre of the entrepreneur's actions. Second, it is not only the self that benefits from this value but also others. Third, entrepreneurship as a competence is linked to a vast array of other competences and skills only partially related to economic, managerial, and financial aspects.

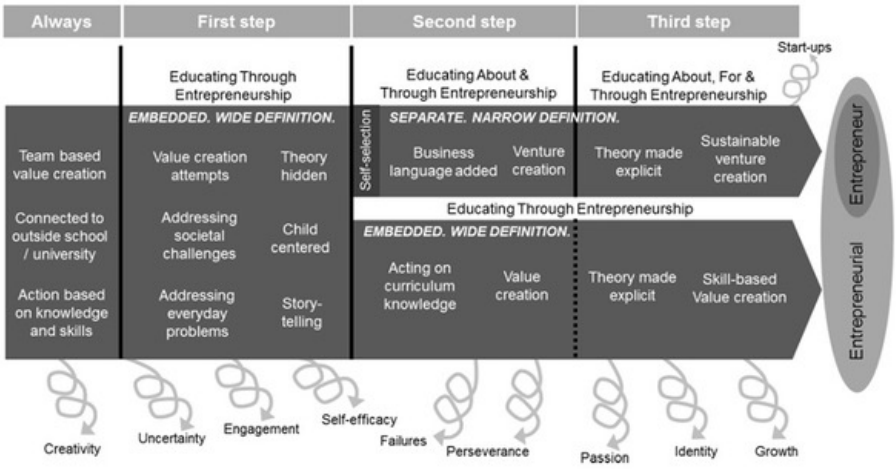
Like all the other competences, entrepreneurship is not only a natural quality of a person but something we can be educated about, something that we can and should develop. From an educational point of view, entrepreneurship is important indeed because it starts with the ability to get involved in situations, approaching them in a creative, critical, and resolute way, and ends with the ability to innovate environments, making an active contribution and responding to emerging needs (Boffo, 2018). As we tried to show in chapter 1, communication with and action within the world is only possible if the subject is open to changing their own story through other people, learning from them, and gaining through their contribution a fuller awareness of the turns they can and want to take in order to become themselves, transforming possibilities and constraints into personal and professional opportunities.

For these reasons, the encounter between education and entrepreneurship can be read through the idea that developing entrepreneurship is a way to foster skills for life, which enable individuals not to succumb to the 'new' that

overwhelms those unable to adapt (Bollas, 2018). To emphasise this aspect, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education of the United Kingdom uses the term 'enterprise education' when referring to training actions aimed at developing the capacity for idea generation. From this point of view, entrepreneurship education properly named coincides only with actions aimed at providing knowledge, skills, and attitudes to apply entrepreneurship in a real context by creating a new business (QAA, 2012, p. 2). Understood this way, the concept of entrepreneurship loses much of the conceptual extent that we embrace, which is why some authors propose to use different terms to underline the internal, subjective, and personal dimension of learning in the process of developing the entrepreneurship skill without losing the dimension more linked to the ability to produce value for others. This applies to terms such as 'entrepreneurial education' (Erkkilä, 2000) and 'entrepreneurial learning', (Lackéus, 2015) which can, in any case, be reabsorbed into what entrepreneurship education is understood to mean in the US literature.

With respect to the paths of entrepreneurial education analysed in the scientific literature, some authors argue that since it may take quite long to develop a value-creating entrepreneurial mindset applicable to all walks of life, it is very important to start early to experiment with entrepreneurship education in the contexts of formal education. Accordingly, Gibb (2008) proposes that entrepreneurship education embedded into the educational system should be 'child-centred in primary education, subject-centred in secondary education, vocational-centred in further education and discipline-centred at university' (p. 22). Progression models such this one have been discussed by Lackéus (2015), who presents a unified progression model of certain interests.

Fig. 9 - Unified progression model for entrepreneurship education (Lackéus, 2015, p. 25).



As you can see, at the end of the three steps, only some individuals actually become entrepreneurs; most acquire an entrepreneurial mindset capable of enhancing skill-based value-creation. The model also introduces an effective distinction between:

- education *about* entrepreneurship, which adds specific knowledge in terms of language and concepts about an ongoing entrepreneurial process;
- education *for* entrepreneurship, which develops an occupationally oriented approach aiming at giving budding entrepreneurs the necessary knowledge and skills to become entrepreneurs; and
- education *through* entrepreneurship, which encompasses and goes beyond the previous two, connecting entrepreneurial characteristics, processes, and experiences to the core of other subjects in general education.

Concerning the activities and tasks enabling this progression, Lackéus confers high responsibility on those who lead the educational process, suggesting that 'teachers should give their students assignments to create value (preferably innovative) to external stakeholders based on problems and/or opportunities the students identify through an iterative process they own themselves and take full responsibility for. Such assignments lead to repeated interactions with the outside world, which triggers uncertainty, ambiguity and confusion. This should be regarded as a positive outcome and a source of deep learning. To alleviate the levels of difficulty and uncertainty such an assignment can result in, a team-work approach should be applied giving the students access to increased creative ability and peer learning opportunities. Sufficient time allowing for establishing fruitful relationships with external stakeholders should also be given to the students [...]. Robust advice on how to manage the value creation process should be given to the students.' (2015, pp. 26-27)

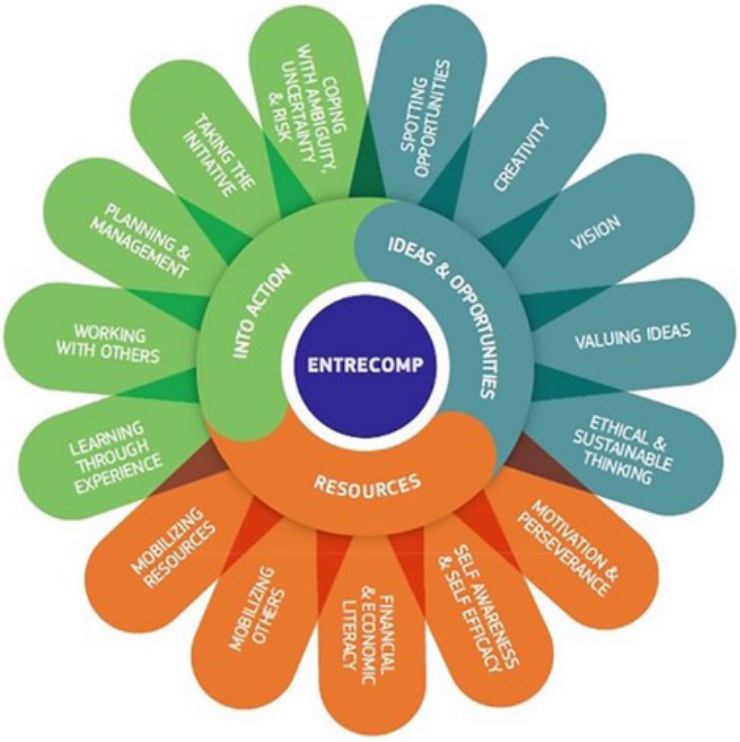
The kind of learning opportunities presented above seem to recreate quite perfectly the learning opportunities that are in front of students and graduate job seekers. In fact, career services often repeatedly provide the opportunity to meet and discover the labour market and its ambiguities, counting on peers and expert counseling. Value creation assignments in this case have to be seen in the development of skills for employability and have to be assessed consequently, even if Lackéus prevents us from doing so with too evasive definitions of the related skills.

As the terminological debate on entrepreneurship education has shown, the reason why related skills definitions tend to remain evasive lies in the fact that it is not easy to build consensus around a common understanding of them. For that reason, numerous organisations have tried to define a comprehensive framework to enable public authorities and private actors to improve their guidance, training, and mentoring services for young people and job seekers and at the same time encourage an entrepreneurial mindset among citizens.

Despite the vibrant interest in entrepreneurial capacity building, the lack

of comprehensive learning outcomes for entrepreneurship education is identified by Eurydice (2016) as one of the main hindrances to the development of entrepreneurial learning in Europe and beyond. For this reason, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, on behalf of the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), developed a competence framework aiming at European citizens and organisations. The roots of this work go back to 2006, when the European Union proposed eight key competences for lifelong learning, one of which was a 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship'. The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, also known as EntreComp, after an intensive process of research and stakeholder consultations, defines 3 competence areas, a list of 15 competences, 442 learning outcomes, and 8 proficiency levels.

Fig. 10 - The EntreComp wheel: 3 competence areas and 15 competences (McCallum, Wiecht, McMullan, & Price, 2018, p. 14).



Task for students

Based on the following competences and their descriptors, reflect on your entrepreneurship and identify:

- competences you possess;
- competences you consider useful to enter and progress in your professional sector.

Competence	**Descriptors**
Spotting opportunities	Identify and seize opportunities to create value by exploring the social, cultural, and economic landscape. Identify needs and challenges to be met. Establish new connections and bring together scattered elements of the landscape to create opportunities to create value.
Creativity	Develop multiple ideas and opportunities to create value, including better solutions to existing and new challenges. Explore and experiment with innovative approaches. Combine knowledge and resources to achieve valuable effects.
Vision	Imagine the future. Develop a vision to turn ideas into action. Visualise future scenarios to help guide effort and action.
Valuing ideas	Define what value means in social, cultural, and economic terms. Recognise the potential of an idea for creating value and identify suitable ways of making the most out of it.
Ethical and sustainable thinking	Assess the consequences of ideas that bring value and the effect of entrepreneurial action on the target community, the market, society, and the environment. Reflect on how sustainable long-term social, cultural, and economic goals are, and the course of action chosen. Act responsibly.
Self-awareness and self-efficacy	Reflect on your needs, aspirations, and wishes in the short, medium, and long term identify and assess your individual and your group's strengths and weaknesses. Believe in your ability to influence the course of events, despite uncertainty, setbacks, and temporary failures.

Motivation and perseverance	Be determined to turn ideas into action and satisfy your need to achieve. Be prepared to be patient and keep trying to achieve your long-term individual or group aims. Be resilient under pressure, adversity, and temporary failure.
Financial and economic literacy	Estimate the cost of turning an idea into a value-creating activity. Plan, put in place, and evaluate financial decisions over time. Manage financing to make sure your value-creating activity can last in the long run.
Mobilising others	Inspire and enthuse relevant stakeholders. Get the support needed to achieve valuable outcomes. Demonstrate effective communication, persuasion, negotiation, and leadership.
Taking the initiative	Initiate processes that create value. Take up challenges. Act and work independently to achieve goals, stick to intentions, and carry out planned tasks.
Planning and management	Set long-, medium-, and short-term goals. Define priorities and action plans. Adapt to unforeseen changes.
Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk	Make decisions when the result of that decision is uncertain, when the information available is partial or ambiguous, or when there is a risk of unintended outcomes. Within the value-creating process, include structured ways of testing ideas and prototypes at early stages to reduce risks of failing. Handle fast-moving situations promptly and flexibly.
Working with others	Work together with others to develop ideas and turn them into action. Network. Solve conflicts and face up to competition positively when necessary.
Learning through experience	Use any initiative for value creation as a learning opportunity. Learn with others, including peers and mentors. Reflect and learn from both success and failure (your own and other people's).

Gonzáles & Wagnaar, 2005; World Economic Forum, 2018

CONCLUSION

Vanna Boffo, Nicoletta Tomei

At the end of this Guide we would like to briefly discuss the future horizons by highlighting some key issues that would benefit from further research in order to re-think the role of adult learning and education in facilitating the transition to work for students in this field.

The centrality of work is a good reason to consider the need to rethink education reflecting the interest in work-related teaching. Building a bridge from the *academia* to the labour market calls for more than a training offer where the experience of learning is central. In this sense, we can underline the importance of the internship and the laboratories as a format that fulfills the need to build a continuous reference to action. In Europe, the adult learning and education professional paths are increasingly placed outside the teaching context. In this perspective, it is necessary to reflect more on the meaning of work-integrated learning. This can enable students to understand the labour markets from an insider perspective where they have the opportunity to visualize, forecast and invent the work.

In this Guide, we started a discussion on the connection between theory and practices. We tried also to indicate where and how theory should lead practice. We put young adults, our students, at the centre of our efforts in order to create the best conditions for an effective guidance process managed by the academic staff. Self-care as a result of effective learning and guidance processes is central today for all young adults but especially for the ones who aspire to care for other humans and their development. A reflection on work as a self-care activity for the care of the other is more important than ever. Migrants, people with relatively lower skill levels, trainers of trainers, mentors, human resource managers, people who provide and receive care: for all of them work can be a guide for their knowledge, a guide for their learning paths towards higher education.

Directing young adults to learn how to look for work, how to work and how to create work means enlarging citizenship. Knowledge is what makes people able to move forward. European citizenship and World citizenship are strongly linked to the spread of culture and knowledge. Adult learning and education have to contribute to the spreading the culture of training and learning as a transformative act of the existing. Our Guide invites to provide all students who deal with adult learning and education with the tools facilitating their ability to be citizens of the world such as transversal skills, reflexivity, flexibility, critical thinking, and proactivity.

The last point we would like to make for the future reflection is the idea that work is a valued creation in terms of autonomy, responsibility, ability to read through contexts, and to connect. Value is also the ethical aspect of ed-

ucational action in terms of communication and openness with one another. We could not speak about the value without acknowledging the aggregating potential of work and education that builds the adult community. This commitment to reflect on the value of work for the education has provided a backdrop for this Guide. It aimed to convey a path to build value for the world of the future, wherever graduating adult educators will find themselves.

REFERENCES

Buiskool B.J., Broek S.D., van Lakerveld J.A., Zarifis G.K. (2010). *Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals: Contribution to the development of a reference framework of key competences for adult learning professionals*. Accessed on http://conference.pascalobservatory.org/sites/default/files/keycomp_0.pdf (19/10/2010)

Bettelheim B. (1987). *A good enough parent*. New York Alfred Knopf.

Boffo V. (2005). *Narrazione e Autobiografia: appunti per applicazioni didattiche*. In D. Sarsini (a cura di), *Percorsi dell'autobiografia. Tra memoria e formazione*. Milano, Unicopli.

Boffo V. (2010). *The Job Finding: How to Tell the Self*. In: L. Malita, V. Boffo. *Finding the First Job through Digital Storytelling. A Guide to Getting into the Employment World*, Timisoara, Editure Mirton.

Boffo V. (2010). *How Digital Storytelling Can Help You Get a Job*. In: L. Malita, V. Boffo. *Digital Storytelling for Employability*. Firenze, Firenze University Press.

Boffo V. (2018). To continue to discuss about entrepreneurship. In *EPALE Journal*, 4/2018, pp. 6-10.

Boffo V., Federighi P., Torlone F. (2015). *Educational Jobs: youth employability in the social Economy, investigation in Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Spain and United Kingdom*. Firenze, Firenze University Press.

Boffo V, Fedeli M., Lo Presti F., Melacarne C., Vianello M. (2017). *Teaching and Learning for employability: New strategies in Higher Education*. Milan-Turin, Pearson

Boffo, V. Gioli G., Del Gobbo, G. Torlone F. (2017). *Employability prcesses and transitions strategiees in higher education: an evidence-based research study*. In V. Boffo, M. Fedeli, F. Lo Presti, C. Melacarne, M. Vianello (a cura di), *Teaching and Learning for employability: New strategies in Higher Education*. Milan-Turin, Pearson.

Bollas C. (2018). *L'età dello smarrimento*. Milano, Raffaello Cortina.

Brennan, J., Johnston, B., Little, B., Shah, T., Woodley, A. (2001). *The Employment of UK Graduates.Comparisons with Europe and Japan*. Bristol, Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Bruner J. (1990). *The Jerusalem-Harvard lectures. Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Clandinin D.J., Connelly F.M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Cooper, T., & Love, T. (2007). e-Portfolios in e-learning. In N.A. Buzzetto-More (Ed.), *Advanced principles of effective e-learning* (pp. 267–292). Santa Rosa, CA: Informing Science Press.

Dacre-Pool L., Sewell P. (2007). The key to employability: developing a practical model for graduate employability. In *Education & Training, 49 (4)*, pp. 277-289.

Davis A., Fidler D., Gorbis M. (2011). *Future work skills for 2020*. Accessed on http://www.iftf.org/uploads/media/SR-1382A_UPRI_future_work_skills_sm.pdf (19/10/19)

Donaldson, L. (2018). *E-portfolio based assessment: Inspiring exploration & supporting evaluation for practitioners*. DCU: Dublin.

Hand, R., Bell, T. W., & Kent, D. (2012). *Mahara ePortfolios: Beginner's guide*. 2nd ed.

Packt Publishing.

Harvey L. (2003). *Transitions from Higher Education to Work. A briefing paper prepared by Lee Harvey (Centre for Research and Evaluation, Sheffield Hallam University), with advice from ESECT and LTSN Generic Centre colleagues*. Accessed on http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/esecttools/employabilitybriefings.php (19/10/19)

Harvey L. (2010). Defining and Measuring Employability. In *Quality in Higher Education, 7, (2), 20,* pp. 97-109.

Harvey L., Moon, S., Geall, V. (1997). *Graduates' Work: Organisation Change and Students' Attributes*. Birmingham, Centre for Research into Quality and Association of Graduate Recruiters.

Harvey, L., Locke, W., Morey, A. (2002). *Enhancing Employability, Recognising Diversity. Making Links Between Higher Education and the World of Work*. Accessed on https://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/Harvey%20papers/Harvey,%20Locke%20and%20Morey%202002%20Enhancing%20employability.pdf (19/10/19)

Haselberger D., Oberhuemer P., Perez E., Cinque M., & Capasso F. (2011). *The ModEs Handbook. L'introduzione delle soft skill nelle istituzioni di istruzione superiore. Linee guida per la progettazione di contesti di apprendimento volti a favorire l'acquisizione delle soft skill. Versione 1.0*. Accessed on http://win.arces.it/public/Euca/2012/Modes/Handbook%20-%20Introduzione%20soft%20skill%20nelle%20istituzioni%20di%20istruzione%20superiore-1.pdf (19/10/19)

Hillage J., *Pollard E. (1998). Employability: developing a frame work for policy analysis, Research Brief No. 85*. London: Department for Education and Employment. Accessed on https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225083565_Employability_Developing_a_framework_for_policy_analysis (19/10/19)

Jenson, J. D. (2011). Promoting self-regulation and critical reflection through writing students' use of electronic portfolio. *International Journal of ePortfolio, 1*(1), 49–60.

JISC (2019). *Getting Started with ePortfolios.* https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/getting-started-with-e-portfolios (19/10/19)

Joint Research Group (2016). *DigiComp 2.0: the digital competence framework for citizens*. Accessed on https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC101254/jrc101254_digcomp%202.0%20the%20digital%20competence%20framework%20for%20citizens.%20update%20phase%201.pdf (19/10/19)

Joint Research Group (2016). *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union; EUR 27939 EN; doi:10.2791/593884.

Lackéus M. (2015). *Entrepreneurship in Education: What, Why, When, How*. Paris, OECD. Lievens F., Harris M.M. (2003). *Research on Internet Recruiting and Testing: Current Status and Future Directions*. In C.L. Cooper & I.T. Robertson (Eds.) International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, vol. 16, pp. 131-165.

Lyotard J-F. (1979). *La condition postmoderne*. Paris, Les Editions de Minuit

McCallum E., Weicht R., McMullan L. & Price A. (2018). *EntreComp into Action: Get Inspired, Make it Happen. A user guide to the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. Lussemburgo: Ufficio Pubblicazioni dell'Unione Europea.

Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.). Artefact. https://www.etymonline.com/word/artefact#etymonline_v_26549 (19/10/19)

OECD (2019). *Skills Outlook 2019: Thriving in a Digital World*. Accessed on https://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-skills-outlook-2019-df80bc12-en.htm (19/10/19)

QAA (2012). *Enterprise and entrepreneurship education: Guidance for UK higher education providers*. Londra, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Ravet, S. (2010). A guide to building a career e-Portfolio. In L. Malita & V. Boffo (Eds.), *Finding the first job through digital storytelling: A guide to getting into the employment world*. Timisoara: Mirton. pp. 51-70.

Scully, D., O'Leary, M., & Brown, M. (2018). *The learning portfolio in higher education: A game of snakes and ladders.* Dublin: Dublin City University, Centre for Assessment Research, Policy & Practice in Education (CARPE) and National Institute for Digital Learning (NIDL).

Smorti A. (1996). Costruzione delle storie, costruzione del sé, In *Adultità, 4,* pp. 63-72.

Stephenson J., Yorke M. (1998). *Capability and Quality in Higher Education*. London, Kogan Page.

Terzaroli C. (2018). Developing entrepreneurship through Design Thinking. In *EPALE Journal*, 3/2018, pp. 20-24.

World Economic Forum (2016). *The future of jobs: employment, skills and workforce strategy for the fourth industrial revolution*. Accessed on http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf (19/10/19).

World Economic Forum (2018). *The Future of Jobs 2018*. Geneve: World Economic Forum. URL: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf (19/10/19)

Yorke M., Knight P.T. (2006). *Embedding Employability into the Curriculum: Learning & Employability Series 1*. York, The Higher Education Academy.

OTHER RESOURCES

EAEA - AE-PRO portfolio guide: Support for creating a portfolio for staff of adult education. https://issuu.com/eaeapublications/docs/ae_pro_portfolio

DCU Reflective Writing Guide (n.d.). 'DCU Reflect' ePortfolio platform. https://reflect.dcu.ie/artefact/file/download.php?file=41&view=13

JISC - How to enhance student learning, progression and employability with e-portfolios. Case studies and guidance on e-portfolios for UK further and higher education - https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/e-portfolios

JISC - Getting Started with ePortfolios - https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/getting-started-with-e-portfolios

JISC - Stories of e-Portfolio Implementation (focus on careers and student employability) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGTFDY1Cf64

JISC - Stories of e-Portfolio Implementation - Thanet College: Effective Practice with e-Portfolios - Stories of e-portfolio implementation (focus on continuing professional development and personalisation)

JISC - *Getting Started with ePortfolios.* https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/getting-started-with-e-portfolios

Wikihow- How to create a career portfolio - https://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Career-Portfolio

DETAILS ON AUTHORSHIP

The contribution was conceived on the basis of the conceptual research work of Vanna Boffo.

For the purpose of attributing authorship:

- Vanna Boffo and Nicoletta Tomei are the authors of the introduction, conclusion, chapter 1, 2, 3, 6.
- Paula Guimaraes and Natalia Alves are the authors of chapter 4.
- Maria Slowey and Tanya Zubrzycki are the authors of chapter 5.

References are the result of the integration of the work of each author, as well as the acknowledgement below, in which is also possible to see special mentions of each team.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors want to thank the INTALL Team Project for the possibility to translate the words and the chapters we thought about and we wrote into actions.

The Dublin City University team would like to acknowledge the helpful contribution on ePortfolios made by Lisa Donaldson, Learning Technologist, Teaching Enhancement Unit at Dublin City University, Ireland.

The University of Florence team would like to acknowledge the helpful contribution of Letizia Gamberi, Junior Researcher, part of the Florence Research Team.

AUTHORS

Natália Alves is Associate Professor of Adult Education and Sociology of Education at the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon. She holds a Bachelor degree and a Master degree in Sociology and a PhD in Sociology of Education. She is a researcher at the Research and Development unit of Education and Training, and researches in the areas of Sociology of Education and Adult Education. Her main research interests include youth and adult education policy in general and VET policies and practices in particular and their implications for educational and professional trajectories mainly in what concerns issues of access and success in education and work.

Email: nalves@ie.ulisboa.pt

Vanna Boffo is Full Professor of General Pedagogy and Adult Education at the Department of Education, Languages, Intercultures, Literatures and Psychology of the University of Florence, Italy. She is Rector's Delegate for Job Placement. She is President of the ~~European~~ Master in Adult Education for the Italian Universities and Coordinator of the Doctoral Course in Education and Psychology at the University of Florence. Her main research interests include higher education system, employability and transition to work, professionalization in educational fields and interpersonal relation and communication studies. She wrote more than 200 articles, essays, and books.

Email: vanna.boffo@unifi.it

Paula Guimarães is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Education, University of Lisbon, Portugal, since 2012. Researcher of the Unit for Adult Education of the University of Minho from 1992 to 2011. Her research interests include adult learning and education policies, adult educators' roles and work, international trends in adult learning and education in theoretical terms and within international organisations. She publishes regularly in European and Portuguese journals and books.

Email: pguimaraes@ie.ulisboa.pt

Maria Slowey is Full Professor and Director of the Higher Education Research Centre, Dublin City University, Ireland, where she also served as Vice-President (Learning Innovation). She was previously Professor and Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning, Glasgow University, Scotland. Her research and policy engagement focus on comparative higher education and access to lifelong learning on which she has published extensively and acted as expert advisor to the major national and international bodies including the OECD, EU UNESCO and the Scottish Parliament. She is an elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Email: maria.slowey@dcu.ie

Nicoletta Tomei, PhD, is teaching Special Pedagogy in a Higher School and she is working as researcher at the University of Florence, Italy. She is involved in the fields regarding the employability and transitions of the young adults from the Higher Education System towards the Labour Market, at the same time she is specialized on the Guidance and Career Services.

Email: nicoletta.tomei@unifi.it

Tanya Zubrzycki is a Research Assistant at the Higher Education Research Centre (HERC) and a part-time Lecturer in the Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Ireland. Her current research interests include lifelong learning, ageing populations and extended working lives. She is also a doctoral student at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, where she explores the changes associated with an academic profession in the Institutes of Technology in Ireland, in connection with the proposals for the establishment of technological universities. She holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Email: tanya.zubrzycki@dcu.ie